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FOR DS/IP/WHA, DS/CIL, WHA/CEN ROIS BEAL

DOJ FOR PATRICE TRAVERS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL ASEC BH

SUBJECT: BELIZEAN GOVERNMENT UNRESPONSIVE IN CRIMINAL CASES

REF: BELMOPAN 116

**¶1.** (U) SUMMARY: While Belizean police have been very cooperative in returning U.S. fugitives, efforts requiring the cooperation of higher levels of the Belizean government have repeatedly led to stonewalls and dead ends. Action on extradition requests has been slow to come. Cases then languish in the court system. Requests for the return of stolen cars - a process that had worked well - have recently been repeatedly ignored. END SUMMARY

**¶2.** (U) An extradition request for the three SEAWELL brothers (REFTEL) took two months to be acted on, by which time the brothers were in hiding. One was located in Jamaica and arrested in the U.S. (following his deportation by Jamaica), but only one of the brothers has been located in Belize. Over the last 10 months, repeated court appearances and appeals have stalled the case. An appeal to the Belize Supreme Court last week was delayed yet again; this time the judge was absent. The Supreme Court hearing has been delayed indefinitely.

**¶3.** (U) A diplomatic note and extradition request for Matthew ANDERSON was delivered October 5, 2007; there has yet to be any response. Police are ready to apprehend ANDERSON, but are waiting for authorization.

**¶4.** (SBU) Finally, the return of stolen cars had been an almost routine process until a change of the Solicitor General. The SolGen, who is required to authorize the return of the vehicles, has in recent months ignored repeated requests from the Embassy. (The current Solicitor General was reported to have been driving one of the stolen vehicles until it was identified as stolen from the U.S.) Over the last twelve months, one official memorandum and five diplomatic notes have met with no official response. Informally, we have been told by MFA that justice system officials have been slow to do their part to approve a response.

**¶5.** (U) POC for this cable is RSO Patrick Harms at 011-501-822-4011, ext. 4007.

DIETER